

News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DES Seeks Input on Thermostat Recycling Plan *Comments Due November 14, 2008*

Concord, NH – A new law (RSA 149-M:59) recently went into effect that requires mercury-containing thermostat manufacturers to create and promote a thermostat collection and recycling program. The plan must be reviewed and approved by the N.H. Department of Environmental Services. The Thermostat Recycling Corporation has submitted a draft recycling program development plan and DES is seeking outside comments as part of the plan review.

The statute requires all manufactures of mercury-containing thermostats to set up a recycling infrastructure and to create an outreach and education plan to ensure New Hampshire's residents and businesses participate in the recycling program. Currently, only an estimated 5 percent of New Hampshire's unwanted thermostats are recycled, and discarded thermostats represent about 150 pounds of mercury in solid waste annually.

Mercury is harmful to human health and is especially toxic to the nervous system – the brain and spinal cord – particularly the developing nervous system of a fetus or young child. Mercury's effects can also be very subtle, taking years to appear. The collection and recycling of mercury devices is an important part of the DES Mercury Reduction Strategy, an effort that focuses on reducing and eliminating mercury releases to the environment.

RSA 149-M:59 requires the Department of Environmental Services to approve a thermostat recycling program that "represents the best available approach for improving mercury-added thermostat collection in the state." DES is seeking comments on the draft recycling plan, which can be found at

http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/p2au/pps/ppp/documents/nh_collection_plan.pdf.

A hard copy of the plan can be requested by calling (603) 271-1749. Comments are due to DES by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, November 14, 2008. For more information, contact Stephanie D'Agostino at (603) 271-6398 or Stephanie.D'Agostino@des.nh.gov.

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